[ARCHERS]

After giving birth, the mother keeps her infant 846
in the shade of her hut for three or four days, 854
receiving visits from admiring neighbors. The [789]
infant is protected by various charms and [853]
amulets attached to its elbow and wrist. It is
fed whenever it cries. When the mother does
leave her hut, carrying the infant on her back,
she protects it from the sun by covering it with
a leaf. When it is bigger she carries it without a
supporting sling, either on her hip or on her
back. The child is always with her, and she
devotes her spare time to playing with it and
singing to it. Even when dancing she may carry [535]
it in a sling at her side.

The child is taught to walk almost as soon as 856
it is big enough to be allowed on the ground
alone. This process is sometimes hastened by [825]
scratching its knee and placing a fast-moving
beetle (*pakalakala*) in the blood, then allowing
it to run away. Soon, the mother believes, her
child will be running as fast as the beetle.

Breast feeding is continued for about a year; 853
sometimes a child continues to be breast fed
while it is able to run about the camp. But from
a few weeks after its birth it is introduced grad-
ually to vegetable foods.

Fathers, although Schebesta writes that they 854
do not like to be bothered with infants, help 855
their wives in the care of children and even 593
attend to their personal needs.

[P. 178-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

If no foster mother is available, an infant whose mother dies during childbirth is fed banana water, supplied by the villagers, through a leaf funnel. When an infant is in such danger, the juice from a certain liana is sprinkled over it to make it strong. 846 853].

A woman who has given birth is not allowed to leave her hut until game has fallen into her husband's net. If the camp is moved before this happens, she is hidden in the bush and taken separately to the new camp where she is kept hidden until her new hut is built for her by relatives (not stated which relatives). The husband himself may not join the hunt but sends his net with another member of the group.

The father keeps the arrow that cut the umbilical cord, and the cord itself, until the child is old enough to throw them both away into the forest.

If no animal falls into the husband's net (the rule is extended usually to include some close relative's net) for some weeks, the mother and infant may be brought out of seclusion by the giving of a feast to her relatives. The baby is then shaved with an arrowpoint, bathed, rubbed with oil and red *nkula* paste, and bands [851]

[1] Note that this took place in a village, where such supernatural explanations are always sought by villagers. It is doubtful that the same explanation would have been given in the forest context. [877 971]

[P 213-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

looks after the boys as soon as they are old enough to join him on the hunt. Fostering and adoption may also take place if a mother is without milk, or if one woman is childless and a baby is born to a friend or relative who already has a large family.

Twins

There is no information available, except that twins have been born and survived, and that the phenomenon of Siamese twins is known. It is believed that to separate them is to kill them.

Postnatal Care and Adolescence

As with the archers, infants among net hunters are given every care and attention. They are breast-fed until after they can walk and talk. It seems, however, that mothers of this group are much more prone than the archer women to leave their children with sisters or close friends for short periods. A great deal of freedom is allowed the infant when it begins to crawl, and it may well be playing with sharp knives, bows and arrows, and trying to climb trees before it can walk. When a camp is moved, an infant is carried either on the hip of its mother or older sister or in a hide sling (Fig. 44) across the hip.

The children, as they grow older, tend to play together, frequently away from the camp.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P.108-HJ

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9. The Mbuti village baraza was never completed, and remained marked only by four posts.

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10. While in the village camp, an Mbuti mother borrows or steals many luxuries too bulky or heavy to carry with her into the forest. Of the mortar and pestle, stool, metal cooking vessels, enamel bowls and bottle of palm oil, she will probably return to the forest with only one vessel.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

838 married men sleeping together. The two age groups do not mix, but
513 among themselves members of the same sex think nothing of sleeping close to each other and deriving mild sexual satisfaction from the physical contact. They state very carefully rules as to how to lie, with legs thrown backwards around the other's legs, or even around his hips or waist, and they say one may entwine legs while lying front to front, though it is not considered good to hold each other too closely with the arms. The thought of any sexual intercourse taking place,
[578] however, is greeted with apparent horror, and homosexuality is never alluded to except as a great insult, under the most dire provocation. There is, however, a dance in which the sexes are effectively reversed, and which is danced with the utmost humor, but the role of which
[535] I could never exactly determine. The dance, *ekokomea*, is dealt with later in the context in which it occurs; namely, at the time of the *molimo* festival.

837 If a considerable amount of sexual liberty is allowed the youths, a
834 fair amount is at least said to be taken by the younger married hunters. I have not, however, been able to record a single instance of a marital dispute involving the band that arose out of infidelity on either side. There are few restrictions on sexual intercourse, though the villagers state many on behalf of the Mbuti. The married hunters, as do the youths, regard the hunt as an opportune time for ac-
841 tivity of this kind. At menstruation, which is a time when a village
[842] woman is under the strictest ritual prohibitions, the Mbuti attitude is that it all depends on whether or not you want children, as this is when conception is most likely to take place. There are those who enjoy sex at this time, and those who find it distasteful. The only restriction is that a wife should inform her husband, or a girl her boy friend, that she is "with blood" so that he will know.

846 Immediately following childbirth is a rather vague period, some-
837 times stated as days, sometimes more grandiosely as years, when intercourse is forbidden. Unfortunately I was able to follow up only on three instances of childbirth, but in each of these the Mbuti fathers did exactly what they said they would do; two of them refrained from intercourse with their wives for about a year, during which time they flirted with as many girls as they liked, and did not deny open gossip
846 that they were "sleeping around." This is the generally accepted pat-
853 tern, the reason being given that a woman can only feed one child at a time, so she must not become pregnant again until her last child is weaned. This may be from one to three years. If during that time

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

her milk dries up and the child is given to someone else to feed, or if it is weaned early, then intercourse is apparently resumed. The third father, however, while acknowledging this to be the accepted pattern, began sleeping with his wife again within a month. This he did even though he had the rare advantage for an Mbuti of having two other wives. His action caused a major dispute. (See p. 207 *seq.*)

During pregnancy there are no restrictions; sexual activity in early pregnancy is believed to hurry matters along, and during the latter stages is merely considered uncomfortable, and possibly physically injurious to the child and mother.

As the evening settles in, nuclear families sit around their family hearths outside the huts, talking across the camp at each other until they go inside to sleep, or simply lie down to sleep by the fire (the women nearly always sleep inside, but youths and men frequently sleep on their hunting nets either by their own fire or by a central fire). Even when families have retired inside their huts, conversation continues between them. If there is any singing, other than of lullabies, the camp divides into age groups, each building its own fire. Unless there is an *elima* or *molimo* festival, there is no marked division between the sexes.

On retiring for the night family hearths are brought inside the huts, and any central fires are also brought inside unless someone is sleeping by them. When a central fire is broken up, each family tends to take an ember and add it to their own hearth. A fire is not left untended at night. During the night a man may awaken and stoke up a fire, warming himself by the blaze. At such times, when cold, the Mbuti smoke particularly heavily, and as a result they sometimes fall unconscious. They may fall into the fire and suffer serious burns, occasionally fatal, and this is one of the few generally cited causes of accidental death—other than falling from a tree.

On days when the hunt stays in the camp, because of rain or because some dispute has caused a rift, both men and women attend to specific chores. Men repair and add to their nets and make new bows and arrows; the women roll twine and work at basketry. Both may make and decorate bark cloth, a major activity on such a day. A good part of the day is always given to singing, dancing, playing games and storytelling. There is a constant shifting from family groupings to age groupings, but mealtime is the only time when there is a definite emphasis on the nuclear family. Even then, male youths, hunters and elders may take their food to a central fire and

2: Tumbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

juice that when cut they have to be bent, with both ends upward so that the liquid will not be lost. Sometimes they are cut into chunks and soaked in water that is used for washing the infant.

A third precaution that is taken is to tie a vine bracelet around one of the infant's wrists, or around his waist. A small piece of wood may be roughly threaded to the vine, and the stated function is again to give the infant strength, except that with specific reference to the wood, it is frequently said that it "gives the child the strength of the forest."

With regard to preferences among the women as to where they give birth, it varies. But there is unanimity that if there is any difficulty at all, then the right thing to do is to go off away from the camp and into the forest, which will "help." The forest appears quite clearly as helper and protector in the vine and wooden medicines and charms, and in the scarification that will take place at the first sign of sickness. Even with adults this is done: the skin is cut in a number of small slits with an arrow, and some of the flesh is gouged out. The ashes prepared from forest woods and plants are made into a paste with spittle and rubbed into the wounds. When the skin grows back, the black ash is still visible beneath, and is regarded as a source of the strength and health and happiness that derive from the forest.

Both parents are under food restrictions until the baby is old enough to crawl, the main one and the only general one being that they must not eat meat. The father may go hunting, but any meat that falls into his net is divided among the others. More often he stays away from the hunt, sending his net out with some youth. However, somewhere between one and two months after birth, and when the family net has made a particularly successful catch, the father will usually announce that he is eating meat again.

The only other restriction placed on the nuclear family by the crisis of birth is the restraint placed on the father, who is forbidden to have sexual intercourse with the mother as long as she is breast-feeding the child. The restriction is quite definitely linked by the Mbuti to the supply of milk, which is also given as the reason for their rather mild aversion to twins. I know of no record of twins who both survived into adulthood, and it is stated that one of them invariably dies. It is also stated that no woman would feed a child at each breast, and I understand that if twins are born, one is simply not fed by the mother, and is taken away and buried by her friends. But there is no fear of twins, and no ritual in connection with their birth or death.

[P.228-D]

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25. Akidinimba celebrates her puberty and her forthcoming marriage during an elima dance.

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26. A young Mbuti mother, Epini, with her infant wrapped in a specially chosen piece of bark cloth. She will freely allow other women to fondle and even nurse her child, and will pass it around for the men to hold and admire.

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

himself for comfort. He stayed in the forest for nearly twenty-four hours, and when he came back the next night he went straight to his hut, unseen, and lay down to sleep. His hut was between mine and Sau's, and I heard him come in, and I heard him crying softly because even his brother wouldn't speak to him.

The next day Pepei was his old self, and everyone was glad to see him laughing; they were happy to be able to listen to his jokes, and they all gave him food so that he wouldn't have to steal again.

But sometimes a dispute cannot be settled in any of these ways. It blows up too quickly to be ended by ridicule; the participants are too old to be thrashed; yet it is not serious enough to merit ostracism. Such disputes are usually trivial in origin, and often arise from the confined and close conditions of living. Personal relations become very involved in a hunting group, particularly when both members of a sister-exchange marriage are living in the same group.

Under this system, when a boy chooses a wife he becomes obliged to find a "sister"—actually any girl relative—to offer in exchange to his bride's family for one of their bachelor sons. This can be quite a chore, as it may be difficult to find a "sister" who is willing to marry the youth his in-laws have in mind as a groom, and whom the groom himself will also like.

Amabosu had married Ekianga's sister, and Ekianga had married, as his third wife, Amabosu's sister, the beautiful Kamaikan. He had just had a child by her, while Amabosu was still childless. Since Kamaikan was nursing a child, Ekianga was under an obligation not to sleep with her, and his two other wives were happy that at last they could expect him to pay them some attention. But to everyone's dismay he continued to sleep with Kamaikan. And one day Amabosu started making loud remarks across the camp about his sister's health.

This was not at Apa Lelo, but at a later camp, Apa Kadiketu. Amabosu's hut was to my right, and it faced directly across toward

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[252] the first of Ekianga's huts, the largest and the best, built by himself and Kamaikan. Amabosu was sitting down at his fire at the time, and his wife was sitting near him, peeling mushrooms for the evening meal. Ekianga was inside the hut with Kamaikan, who had given the baby to her old mother, Sau, to look after for a few hours. At first Amabosu's remarks brought no response from the closed hut. But he became more and more explicit, denouncing Ekianga's shame in considerable and intimate detail, hinting that what was going on inside the hut at that moment was precisely what every new mother should avoid if she was to be able to look after the baby properly and give it lots of milk.

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607 At last Ekianga retorted angrily from inside the hut. Amabosu continued to sit quietly, staring into the fire, with his wide, strange eyes. He answered in as caustic tones as he could find. In the end, Ekianga's door burst open and Ekianga appeared, spear in hand. He looked wild with fury and shame, and he flexed his muscles and hurled the spear at Amabosu with all his might. Amabosu looked up from the fire for the first time, but sat perfectly still with not a flicker of emotion on his face, his eyes still wide and cold and staring. The spear struck the ground within twelve inches of his feet, which was probably exactly where it had been intended to land. Amabosu calmly rose, pulled the spear free, and tossed it behind his hut into the rubbish dump. This was just about as insulting a gesture as he could have made at that moment, and it started one of the most dramatic fights I have seen in a Pygmy camp, and one of the most complicated.

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607 As long as it was between the two men all was well, but the wives were torn between their loyalties as wives and as sisters. Amabosu's wife entered the fray by swearing at her husband for throwing her brother's spear into the rubbish dump. Amabosu countered by smacking her firmly across the face. Normally Ekianga would have approved of such manly assertion of authority over a disloyal wife, but as

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the wife was his sister he retaliated by going into his hut and dragging out Kamaikan, whom he in turn publicly smacked across *her* face. Kamaikan was made of tough stock. She picked up a log from the fire and beat her husband over the back with it. It is difficult to remember just exactly what the sequence of events was after that.

The two wives began fighting tooth and nail, quite literally. The men battled with burning logs, three or four feet long, swinging them from the cool end, but always just missing each other. Every now and again one of the girls would break free and go to the assistance of her brother, and the other would run and pull her away.

As always, a large crowd gathered—men, women and children. But nobody volunteered to stop the fight or to adjudicate in any way. They took one side or the other, either according to the rights and wrongs of the issue, or merely on the grounds that one or the other was the better fighter and more likely to win. The general opinion was that Ekianga should certainly not be sleeping with Kamaikan while she was nursing a baby, but since Kamaikan was equally at fault, Amabosu was wrong in defending her. By and large, however, the onlookers were more interested in the fight than the issue at stake.

As the fight grew more serious, and some visible damage was being done to all four parties, first relatives and then friends began to take sides more vigorously, and it looked as though fighting were going to break out all over the camp. At that moment Arobanai, Ekianga's senior wife, came striding out of her hut and announced in her deep contralto voice that she couldn't rest with all this noise going on, so it would have to stop. To make her impartiality quite plain she added that her animal of a husband could sleep with anyone he wanted to as far as she was concerned. She then went to where the two girls were locked together, both looking very much the worse for wear. She pulled them apart, and having given Amabosu's wife a hefty kick she took Kamaikan tenderly and led her back to her own hut.